

Self Drive Australia

By

IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS

Day 1: SYDNEY. Upon arrival at Sydney Airport you will be met and privately transferred to the **Observatory Hotel** for a two night stay. The Observatory Hotel is superbly located near Sydney's historic Rocks area, nestled near the vibrant harbor and the world famous Sydney



Harbor Bridge. Spacious, elegant, and beautifully appointed, the rooms and suites at The Observatory Hotel are designed to meet the needs of the most fastidious guest. Sydney is the capital of the New South Wales region and was Australia's first permanent European settlement. Sydney is admired for its large harbor, beautiful coastline and foreshores, bayside parks and gardens, warm and pleasant climate and cosmopolitan culture.

This afternoon you may wish to join a scheduled "coffee cruise" of Sydney Harbor... The most famous of all Sydney Harbor sightseeing tours, this cruise shows you what public and private Sydney are really all about. We cover the Mai Harbor, with attractions such as the Opera House, the Harbor Bridge, and Ford Denison, before cruising the magnificent upper reaches of Middle Harbor, where palatial waterfront homes, parks, beaches and marinas show Sydney life at its finest. The cruise includes coffee to enjoy while you are on the water – hence its name!

Day 2: SYDNEY SIGHTS & BEACHES / SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE PERFORMANCE.

This morning you will be picked up from your hotel for a small group tour. From the hotel head to the charming Rocks, where you can stroll around the historic area with its quaint old cottages, pubs and churches. Next, travel along Macquarie St, the seat of government for NSW, the Mint and Hyde Park Barracks. Continue on past St. Mary's Cathedral and to Mrs. Macquarie's chair for an unsurpassed view of Sydney Harbor, the Opera House and Bridge. Next venture along the shores of Sydney Harbor through King's Cross, Double Bay and Rose Bay. A brief stop for morning tea in the beautiful Sydney Harbor National Park before continuing on to South Head with its breathtaking view of Sydney Harbor and the City. Take a short stroll along the cliff tops and rejoin your group as you make your way to the world famous Bondi Beach and Centennial Park before returning to the hotel.



Late this afternoon make your own way to the Opera House for an "Opera House Package" including an inspection tour, a 3 course dinner and a concert performance – subject to season. An alternative option to the opera would be a ballet performance.



NOTE: No performances on Sunday's and usually mid-December – end January.

Day 3: SYDNEY / CANBERRA / QUEENBEYAN. After breakfast collect your rental car and drive via the sheep farming town of Goulburn to Canberra, perhaps stopping for coffee in the historic town of Beria, with its jail and courthouse. Canberra is Australia's national capital and a visit to the Australian War Memorial and Museum and also the Parliament House is recommended before continuing onto the **Avalanche Homestead** for your two night stay.

The Avalanche homestead is located 45km south east of Canberra in the magnificent Tinderry Mountains. The main homestead is positioned on a spur with truly spectacular views.

Day 4: A DAY ON THE FARM! Today enjoy a day at leisure to enjoy the farm. The property is used for cattle and fine wool sheep. The horses are used for mustering the stock, although there are some quiet ones for guests who have not ridden for some time. Avalanche provides an opportunity for guests to experience the daily operation of a successful farming operation. You may join in or observe the work, see the dogs bring in the sheep and cattle, have a go at shearing a sheep under the expert guidance of a shearer, ride or walk through the tall eucalyptus trees and see and hear the many different types of birds and native animals that make it their home. For those not so agile, there is always a 4WD vehicle available to transport you around the property! A good book from the library and a cool drink in the Gazebo overlooking the swimming pool and the mountain panorama is always a good way to relax ...

Day 5: QUENBEYAN / BEECHWORTH. This morning leave Avalanche behind you as you travel via Cooma and the Alpine Way to the historic town of Beechworth. While in Beechworth, you will be staying overnight at the beautiful **Finches of Beechworth Bed & Breakfast**. Finches is a meticulously restored Victorian home, nestled within an extensive English style garden and offering elegant accommodation and tranquil surroundings. The delightful sitting room, with its extensive library and open fire, is a perfect place to relax or to enjoy a pre-dinner drink. We can also organize a gourmet food platter of famous local produce. The house is framed by a wide wisteria-covered verandah, where breakfast is served in the warmer months.



Day 6: BEECHWORTH / MELBOURNE. Today spend the morning in Beechworth to tour this historic town and explore the galleries, gardens, antique and gift shops. This afternoon journey through Ned Kelly country (Australia's famous pioneer day's highwayman) to Melbourne. In Melbourne you will be staying at the **Langham Hotel** for a three night stay. The Langham Hotel overlooks the tranquil Yarra River and offers refined elegance and sumptuous comfort. The hotel is nestled amongst an abundance of al fresco cafes, restaurants and boutiques. Melbourne is set around the shores of Port Philip Bay and the city itself is laid out in a large rectangle and boasts a lively and cosmopolitan atmosphere.



Day 7: MELBOURNE / FAIRY PENGUINS. Return your rental car this morning at the city office and enjoy a morning at leisure to discover this amazing city. In the afternoon, join a small group tour to Phillip Island to see the penguin parade. This fascinating experience takes you southeast of the city through the rich Gippsland coastal region. During the journey you will visit a boutique winery overlooking the Westernport Bay and hear colorful stories about explorers, sealers and whalers who settled in this region. Phillip Island is known for its wildlife. Here you can walk amongst the treetops at the Koala Conservation Center to see a protected koala company. Your guide will take you through the nature reserve bush land and wetlands to see wallabies and a range of bird life in the wild. Penguins come ashore each evening at dusk form their ocean feeding grounds. The large penguin colony enters the beach in groups and "walk and talk" loudly as they work their way into the dunes where their burrow nests are situated. Boardwalks enable the visitor to gain close contact with the penguins in the dune area. Enjoy a fish and chip dinner at the Jetty Restaurant in the township of Cowes on Phillip Island. Return to Melbourne later this evening.

Day 8: MELBOURNE CITY SIGHTS. This morning you will be met at your hotel for a small group city sights tour to discover the diversity of this multicultural city. See historical buildings, beautiful gardens, and shopping areas famous for their restaurants and fashion. Melbourne is THE sporting city of Australia. Melbournians are passionate about their Aussie Rules footy and almost all sports known to mankind. Travel past the sporting precinct that became famous in the 1956 Olympic Games and now roars to the cheers of “Aussie Rules” crowds each weekend. See the nearby Rod Laver Tennis Center that hosts the Australian Tennis Open each year. Melbourne is home to people from all over the world and this cultural diversity is expressed in the food and fashion centers. Walk along the shopping strips of upmarket traditional Toorak, funky Chapel Street Prahan or culturally Vietnamese Bridge Street Richmond.



Return to the Melbourne Botanic Gardens for afternoon tea near the banks of the Yarra River. Drive to the Italian precinct of Lygon Street Carlton and see the historic Exhibition Buildings alongside the ultramodern Melbourne Museum. Finish your tour in the bustling activity of Queen Victoria Markets, where a huge range of fresh produce, exotic foods, clothing and artifacts are sold amidst a chorus of stall holders.

NOTE: The Queen Victoria Markets are not open Monday and Wednesday.

The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure.

Day 9: DEPART. Today you will be met and privately transferred to Melbourne Airport for your onward or homeward flight (flights are not arranged by IQOTC). At this time IQOTC services will end.

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